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APPLIED RELIGION

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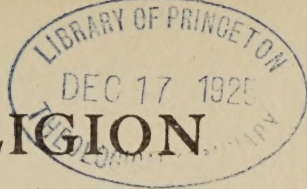
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CALCUTTA AND MADRAS



APPLIED RELIGION

BY

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Lord Bishop of Kensington.

WITH A PREFACE BY

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LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

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PREFACE

THE addresses that are printed in this book were given in the Church of S. Martin-in-the-Fields by the Bishop of Kensington. The Bishop has kindly consented to publish them at the urgent request of many who heard them who would gladly possess them in printed form and who wish to take some hand in sending them out to a wider public.

I feel deeply grateful to the Bishop for consenting to their publication and in this Foreword I would take the opportunity of thanking him respectfully for many signal acts of kindness to S. Martin-in-the-Fields, not the least of which have been the frequent addresses that he has given to its mid-day congregation.

I hope that besides the many who are accustomed to look to the Bishop of Kensington for spiritual guidance on matters of vital urgency there may be many others who will discover in this book the help that they may need for these times of bewilderment and opportunity.

H. R. L. SHEPPARD.

6, S. MARTIN'S PLACE,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

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CHAPTER I

RELIGION APPLIED TO LIFE

“**T**HERE is a fear before men, even of optimistic temperament, to-day as they contemplate the new democracy throughout the world. It is the spectre of a world ruled by mechanical forces for material ends.” They feel themselves to be impelled by forces out of their own control. There seems to be no escape from the grip of the mechanical and the material. In spite of themselves they are contributing to results which they would avoid if only they knew how. Describing the impressions of life in New York, a visitor lately recorded thus: “Human personality seems to be overwhelmed by a perfect cyclone of electricity, mechanically applied to life!”

We are no less familiar with similar experiences on this side of the Atlantic. As a result there has grown a new sense of what has been called “spiritual destitution in a mechanically framed universe,” and “a great hunger for the ‘human ends’ as the only ends worth the struggle in the modern world.”¹ There

¹ COPEC Report on “Politics and Citizenship,” p. 93.

will be general agreement with the conclusion that "the world is increasingly aware of its need of escape from the pressure of material forces, and is more ready to listen and respond to a spiritual interpretation of life."¹

There is, in fact, a growing sense of the need of the spiritual forces which can counteract those which are material, if disaster is to be avoided.

It is at this point that the necessity of Society is discovered to be coincident with the claims and the offer of the Kingdom of God. In danger of being overwhelmed by forces which are so complex and out of our control, men are everywhere asking wistfully whether there be any power which can deliver us from this crushing pressure?

Is "religion" applicable to daily life?

The claim which is made by the Christian Church has recently been clearly stated thus: "the Christian faith, rightly interpreted and consistently followed, gives the vision and the power essential for solving the problems of to-day."²

It is the claim which was made by our Lord Himself. And in Him the claim is overwhelming because He is the unique, convincing example of applied religion.

The fascination which the Person of Jesus has

¹ *Times*, October 6th, 1924.

² Basis of COPEC.

for men, especially to-day, is in the vision of One Who, living subject to all the forces which move men to fear or to despair, was supreme over all circumstances and master of all opposing forces. Though He lived in closest contact with men of every class, He kept unbroken touch with the world unseen. Though He walked earth's cities and villages, He was all the time moving in a world in which for Him life was eternal, truth supreme, and love the omnipotent force. He saw things and persons in a light which made them different to what they appeared to other men.

Behind every appearance He saw the out-shining of the divine purpose :—the truth, the beauty and the Spirit which transfigures everything which has life. He gave to everything its spiritual interpretation because, in the light of the presence of God, all things were viewed as included in the Kingdom of His Father. Behind all perversions, distortions and contradictions He had insight into the reality of the realm of eternal values and the working of unseen spirit.

He drew men's attention to what was present everywhere and at all times,—in them and around them :—" the Kingdom of God is here," He cried. " Lo ! the Kingdom of God is within you."

That was His Gospel.

Life seen in Jesus was indeed " Applied Religion."

It was life lived in intimate and unbroken intimacy with His Father Unseen. It was the manifestation in the flesh of Spirit supreme over all outward conditions and transforming every human relationship. He applied the power of the spiritual world to the every day affairs of life. He brought God into touch with everything human. Life to Him was one, whether in the heavenly or in the earthly sphere. Earth was but the sphere for the manifestation of the eternal love; and love's principle of living He applied to every human relationship. For Him life's centre was in God, "the Author and Giver of all good"; and from that centre there was ever radiating light and love and power. For Him life could never be centred in "things," for nothing had meaning or value apart from God. Still less could life's centre be found in self, because He could never conceive of Himself as separated from the Father.

Action and word and thought were inspired only by reference to His Father in heaven, Who, ever present, was expressing Himself through His Humanity. His claim was: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

In whatever He did He could say, "the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing." "The Father abiding in me doeth his works." As He taught, speaking as never man spake, He would declare: "as the Father taught me, I speak

these things." "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me."

The effect of this application of religion to life was a perfect harmony of being and the unhindered working of spiritual power in all human concerns which He touched.

By that applied religion Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, gave sight to the blind, recovered the hopeless and fallen, and gave new life to the dead. On a magnificent scale He showed how spirit quickens, gives life ; how spiritual power can transform all outward conditions, how it can be applied to every department of our common life. As He demonstrated this in action *He made God real* to men, and He gave a spiritual interpretation to all human life.

The outstanding need of our time is to discover and apply this same power, which alone can counteract the pressure of material forces. In a word, our need is of the Spirit which quickeneth. The answer to our necessity is in "applied religion" ; in the application of the principles of Christ to daily life.

It is to this particular work in life to which the Christian body is called. We are called to let that same power which wrought so mightily in Him have free play through us. We are invited by Christ to let Him be supreme in His own Kingdom, to let Him be the sovereign power within us. We are

here to witness that the transformation of human society and of individual lives will not be effected by any other method than by letting the spirit of Christ govern our lives. The Gospel we are charged to preach may be put in just such terms as these : " You have no need to search for God's Kingdom, nor for the power by which life can be changed. You have it already. It is here. Lo ! the Kingdom of God is within you ! Then awake to the consciousness of the fact. Realize that the unseen forces of the Spirit are at your disposal. Life is one ; it is not cut up into separate compartments. Cease to treat God as remote and unreal ; no longer ignore and despise the things that are spiritual because you have hitherto persuaded yourselves that only the things which you see and handle are of value. To all who will acknowledge His presence and who surrender themselves to His working, His Kingdom is open : its limitless resources are at your disposal. Allow them free, unhindered play in His own Kingdom within, and there is nothing in your outward conditions that cannot be transformed ; there is no problem of human relationship to which His Eternal principles cannot be applied. You are all the time attempting the impossible by omitting the decisive factor—It is the spirit that quickeneth."

That truth of the supremacy of Spirit Jesus revealed and applied to life. That same quickening,

transforming power is available for us to-day for the freeing of mankind from the bondage of those forces which are making life impossible.

Christ is saying now as when walking this earth, "Follow Me; trust Me: let Me be King within my own Kingdom: let Me be master in My own house: let My spirit fill you, work in you and transform you. Do not hinder Me, deny Me, reject Me. It is the spirit that quickeneth."

The activity in response to this call which is required of us is just to get self out of His way, and to open our hearts, minds and being to His constraining influence, so that God can work through us.

Our task, in a word, is to make God real to men to-day. It is the energy of applied religion that is needed; that is, that God Himself be brought into touch with life at every point and in all its concerns. He will do His own transforming work if we will but let Him. But we must put first things first, and in the order of importance Christ gave.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Then, the things about which we are now so anxious and on which our mind and heart are centred will assume their true proportion. Filled with Christ's spirit, surrendered to the spirit's guidance, our outlook on life will be changed. Dominated by Christ's spirit, men as individuals and in bodies will find a bond of union which will be expressed

in a comradeship and a brotherhood which will find out the way to live together in peace and mutual respect. That way will be found only as we allow ourselves to become "spiritual"—that is, as we believe in the spirit, enter into His secret and let our lives be the expression of the Truth, the Beauty and the Love which eternally flow from Him.

The power which we so restlessly seek is within our reach. It is within us. But we have allowed ourselves to be so overwhelmed by the complexities of our civilization that we have lost grip upon fundamentals. We have let slip our hold upon God and the unseen Kingdom. We have acquiesced in regarding the Author and Giver of all life as some far distant external Force, and His Kingdom as remote. Our immediate need is to be renewed in the knowledge of the intimacy of our relationship to the God of our life and of the divine source of limitless power within us. To awake to that consciousness and to reconstruct our habitual thinking in the light of its truth will lead us to a new adjustment to life. In recovering the old truth we shall find the solution of our problems as we learn to co-operate with the divine source of energy within.

It is strange indeed that we should have allowed ourselves to miss the application of the very meaning of our religion. Christians have known it from the

beginning. Yet somehow we have lost the secret. In the hour of our deepest need we must recapture it and apply its sovereign principle. It is "Christ in you who is the hope" of a glorious manifestation of life.

Let us grasp this fundamental principle of living ; let it govern all our thinking. So may our lives be the outshining of the power which makes all things new.

CHAPTER II

THE POWER TO TRANSFORM LIVES

IT became evident to those who first listened to Jesus that the acceptance of His teaching would change men's accepted ideas and their general practice. To Scribes and Pharisees it meant a dangerous experiment and the destruction of all that they held sacred. Here was one who read a new meaning into what "had been said to them of old time," who disregarded the oral tradition which His hearers held to be equal in authority to the written law ; who neither kept the weekly fasts nor observed the elaborate distinction between clean and unclean ; and who consorted with outcasts and sinners. He neglected the traditional methods of teaching and preached in a way of His own. He spoke of Himself as though He were an authority independent of the law. "*I say unto you*" was the warrant against all the accepted teachers, past or present.

So it was that when He was challenged Christ made it plain that His Gospel was not destructive but constructive. There would be change, but not

of the sort man imagined—"I am come to *fulfil*." By this He meant that He was concerned to carry the existing revelation of truth to completeness, and to bring the principles which underlay the outward form into actual application to life. He was not lowering the standard of moral requirement, but immensely raising it. "I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

He was come to transform all life and human relationships, not to leave men as he found them; to bring a power to apply to life's conditions which would change them. The process would be one of transformation, not of destruction. Principles would receive a fuller meaning, and life, instead of being emptied and narrowed, would be filled full of beauty and power. "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly."

The world to-day is aware of the tremendous changes which are affecting its life. It has little inclination to attend to what was said by them "of old time." It distrusts what the Church has to offer in what are called "the old common places of religion." It roundly asserts "they cannot apply to life as we know it to-day!" This is only another way of saying that society is suffering from a great hunger for the food which can satisfy its

spiritual destitution. So to-day a deep necessity fronts us to come into vital touch with the Jesus Who now, as ever, comes "to fulfil"; to give a new meaning to old truth; to apply a new spirit, a new power, a new understanding of His principles such as will effect a real transformation in human relationships. It is no less a claim than this which Christ makes.

In His own day Jesus made that condition plain, as He said: "Except a man be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God." "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be to-day born anew." That power to redeem life from the barrenness which makes our efforts at reform so impotent, to free ourselves from the pressure of the mechanical forces which are so overwhelming—; that power we too know is *spiritual*. It can come only from Him who is Spirit, to whom all power is given.

In Jesus Christ we are confronted with the one Person in Whom we can be sure human nature was transformed. In His humanity there shone the radiance of the Divine life. In Him there was power to deal with every outward condition and to remain unmoved, to maintain unbroken union with the Father unseen and at the same time to enjoy complete fellowship with men and women. The power came from within. He had life "in Himself" in

all its fulness ; and His message to mankind is that this same power to live is within us. It is the spirit within us that quickeneth, which gives fulness to life. "The Kingdom of God is within you."

The transformation of human life is to be by the change wrought by that spirit within us, evoked, inspired and empowered by Him, "by Whom, in Whom and unto Whom are all things."

To effect this transformation He became one of us. "The Son of God became man that we the sons of men might become sons of God."

In Him we see human nature, not as it is in its disguises and perversions, but in its reality. Here is the measure and the stature of full manhood. We have become so used to the sight of human nature in its perverted forms that we conclude that it is incapable of change. We go on repeating that shibboleth of despair—"human nature is human nature!" and we mean that it is incapable of change, that it is static not plastic. But to persist in calling the perversion and caricature of our humanity inevitable and unalterable is an intolerable abuse of language. It is blasphemy without excuse when in the Person of Jesus we see the promise fulfilled of all that man can become. In Him we behold human nature, not destroyed but fulfilled; we see life and all human relationship transformed. There we behold God Himself in man, and the power by which all things in all their appearances can be subdued unto Himself.

Without question in Christ we see Religion applied to life as we know it. He is "the power of God unto salvation," the power to transform that which has become the expression of what is weak, ugly and hopeless. Here then is our Hope. In Him is the secret to the power which can transform and save.

It is everything to know that we are not doomed by any law of inevitable fate to be victims of overwhelming outward conditions. With the vision of that radiant Person we are sure that there is that within us which is of God; there is the spirit. Though hidden and smothered, it can be stirred into vital response; it can move the inert faculties and inspire the dormant powers of our being. We can claim our inheritance and enter into possession of our own Kingdom; we can be vitalised, quickened, enlightened; we can be filled full of His spirit.

When we assert that we can be, we point to the fact that in countless instances Christ has touched human lives with what He called "the Finger of God"; and those whom He touches He transforms. He did so when He was among men. He does so still. He came to men seeking entrance where He could do this transforming work, and "as many as received Him to them gave He power to become Sons of God"—There are many examples: let us see Him in a characteristic scene at this work.

One day He was passing through Jericho, where was a man named Zacchæus, a chief publican, and he was rich. Zacchæus sought to see Jesus who he was : he was curious and wanted to see one who had given sight to a blind man. Being small of stature he climbed into a sycamore tree to see Him as he passed by. To his intense amazement when Jesus came to the place He stopped, looked up and said, "Zacchæus, make haste and come down ; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

" I must abide at thy house ! " Here was no chance stranger, but one who knew him by name ; who knew all about his life, which all other men viewed only with aversion and contempt. Yet Jesus must be his guest and abide in his house ! Jesus wanted him to be with Him, to minister to Him, to be His friend ! That gave the man a vision of life's possibilities and meaning which was entirely new. From that hour Zacchæus saw in Jesus something which made all his life's work and motives seem contemptible ; and with that vision of the beauty and strength of Love, giving and not seeking to gain, he found a new outlook on life's purpose. A new motive took possession of him, and life became transformed from that moment. He made haste and came down and received Him joyfully as he welcomed Him into his house.

Of the completeness of that transformation his

words of welcome, spoken in the presence of all his old associates in business, were the expression :—" Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor : and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." "*I give*" : "*I restore*" : not " I seek to get and to keep : I will claim all I can and exact to the utmost." Henceforth there were no wistful lookings back, no regrets at leaving the old life. He received Jesus gladly into his house and made Him Master there henceforth. Even though Jesus would pass on and he might see Him no more, the spirit of Jesus would abide, and by that law which he had seen in its working in Him he would live. Zacchæus in fact became a new man. Life was changed for him, because Jesus had given him insight into its reality. Life with its true standards of value was revealed by this coming to him of the One who was the Way, the Truth, the Life.

How thorough the transformation was we need not doubt. There is a legend which tells us of Zacchæus in later days, and though it be legend it has in it the ring of truth in experience.

His wife noticed that Zacchæus used to go into the garden, carrying early every morning a bucket of water. One time she followed him and found him pouring the water from the bucket on the roots of a tree with reverent care and with prayer. Awed by what she had seen, she stole back unobserved. After a time she asked him what he did every morning

in the garden carrying water to that tree. Zacchæus' reply was this : " Wife, that is the tree from whence I saw Him who called me down and said ' I must abide at thy house to-day.' Thou knowest how from that day our home has been blessed and how my life has been changed. I love that tree which helped me to see Him who opened new life for me."

New life ! That is our need surely. Has Christ wrought it in us ? Have we yet found the secret which He alone can impart ? Now, as then, He comes, and in His coming is our opportunity. For us it may be as when Jesus passed through the streets of Jericho. He can as readily transform life for us as for a Bartimæus or for a Zacchæus. That same love is ever the constraining motive for His coming to as many as will receive Him.

Shall any of us say " I have nothing that wants changing—nothing to repent of : let me stay as I am : let me cling to what I have got : I have no desire to change my life : the principles by which I have got on hitherto are good enough for me ! "

In our hearts we know that we are not satisfied. There must be change—transformation—a new spirit if for the world's disorder there is to come harmony, and for its warring passion there is to be peace and goodwill. One only can teach us the secret : One only can show us the likeness to God in which we can find the fulfilment of our hopes.

It is "in the face of Jesus" that we shall see that truth. He can show us greater things than we have any of us yet known. But He cannot show them to us unless we come to a close acquaintance.

To that life of intimate companionship He invites.

"Make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." That is all He asks of us.

From such an abiding there is everything to hope. As we welcome Christ and gladly receive Him into the house of our being, He will teach us how to explore that divine storehouse within, from whence we can consciously draw upon the power which will transform our lives.

CHAPTER III

THE POWER TO FORSAKE SIN

CHRIST came to transform life, to change men, to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth.

The world into which He came needs this change because it is in a state of disorder. Though this is an ordered universe, where everything follows the sequence of cause and effect, in which there is everywhere evidence of the purpose of the originating mind of Him whom we call God, there is disorder.

It is hard to reconcile the idea of a good God and a loving Father ordering all things for His children's good with the facts of apparently triumphant evil, the afflictions of the innocent, the wreckages wrought by disease and the tragedies of mental and moral insanity. It is futile to discuss the origin of evil. Its existence fronts us as a reality. There is no escape from the fact of sin. If life for man is to be transformed, in sin we face that which makes transformation necessary.

It was with the hidden causes of the disorder in human society that Christ came to deal. In a

typical instance we find our Lord attacking it. A man is brought to Him, who is incapable of movement. He is lying on a bed palsied. On seeing him, the first word which Jesus speaks is directed to the factor in the case of which no one else was thinking—"Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

At once the Scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?

By His action Jesus manifested the power which is available for the transformation of human life—the power which He was come to release, by which the disorder in the world can be reduced to order, and men may be set free to enjoy the heritage of life.

Jesus did not say "I forgive thee"—but "*thy sins are forgiven thee.*" He spoke of the change which the action on the part of the man and his friends, in a persistent and successful effort to come to Him, had wrought. That action had brought them into oneness with the power by which a state of disorder is forsaken.

Christ brings forgiveness of sin by exposing its true nature, and by showing it up in its true light; in so doing He determines man in a changed attitude towards it. What, we may ask, is the habitual attitude of men's mind towards evil, both in general and in particular? Is it not to admit its claim to sovereign power: to acknowledge an inevitable necessity to yield to its call and to surrender to its

demand to immediate indulgence? Not good, but evil, is given the place of supremacy. Evil is feared as the power which it is vain to resist : and the good, which in our hearts we admire, we reject. When we put forward the constant excuse for this surrender to evil, and say, " it is natural " : " self interest not only is, but must be and ought to be the chief motive of human action " : " there is an inevitable necessity to gratify passion," etc ; then we are enthroning evil in a position of supremacy in our mind. We yield to its claims by a refusal to obey the call of that force of good within, whose reality is proved by the sense of shame which accompanies each act of surrender. By such surrender we give power to evil.

Implanted in all men is that sense of shame in yielding to the claims of their lower nature which is nothing less than a conviction of sin. In the last resort man can never disown the appeal of that good which he admires even when he surrenders to the claim of evil which in his heart he despises. We feel it and know it universally. " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Christ came into the world to deliver man from the power of evil in all its manifestations. He attacked it in every stronghold, whether in the physical or the moral sphere. He did not waste time in accounting for its origin. He dealt with it as a fact and He met it everywhere as the

enemy to be attacked. He rebuked it and He conquered it. He just took away its power by living in the world and Himself remaining untouched by evil. He gave it no place; He admitted no right even of existence, so that no man could convict Him of sin. In Him there was no foothold for evil, for the house of His Being was filled with the Spirit of all good. Though assailed on every side by the claims of evil, He was without sin. He preserved unbroken His union of heart and mind and will with the Father. In that condition of perfect harmony of being, sin could have no place. He acknowledged no power but of God. He therefore treated every contrary power as a usurper, a deceiver, an enemy. His attitude towards this appearance was in marked opposition to what men habitually adopt. He showed that its power consisted in the place which was given to it in men's thoughts. "From within, out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, thefts, murders, covetousness, . . . all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man." In His exposition of the moral law, which the universal conscience accepted, He traced the evil to the thoughts, cherished and welcomed by the mind. He taught that everything depends upon what is allowed to fill the heart and mind of man. There can be no agreement between good and evil. Where good is enthroned, evil can have no place. "If thine eye be single, thy whole

body shall be full of light: if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." So whether in the physical or in the moral sphere the actual seat of disorder is in the mind and heart; and this because the good has been perverted, distorted and opposed by wrong thinking. Love of good has become fear of evil. Love's energy has become confined to the circle of self and has turned sour in lust. The light of truth has been obscured by the delusion of the mind that, in admitting the claims of his lower nature and by defiance of the higher and the spiritual, man will find the satisfaction of his being.

So Christ's power to forgive sin came from His power to give man clear vision of the Good, of which all evil is but the distorted appearance. He showed men the reality, of which sin is but the ugly perversion. He made evident that in the true man, in Himself a Son of man, evil has no power. It was as though He were dealing with a crowd of frightened children who had been scared out of their wits by an ugly bogey, which their fears and the lying reports of their elders had made a terror. He dared to take the bogey in His hands, stripped it of its scare-crow coverings, took it to pieces and made it the object of contempt and derision. He would say "See, my children, it is a lie, a fraud, an idol which you have allowed power over you by the place you have given it in your minds. Never be afraid again. Banish it from your thoughts; you are ever with Me, all that I have is yours. That

same power which is in Me is likewise in you ; the power of triumphant good is God's gift to you ; evil can never exist with good. God Alone IS. *Let Him be your God* : forsake the evil and choose the good. Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, all thy mind, all thy strength. In choosing God—the Good—you forsake evil." To one who had so come He could say " thy sins are forgiven thee," for " forgiven sin is *forsaken* sin."

Apart from the power which Love imparts to the sinner to forsake sin, forgiveness by itself can never effect the transformation of a life. Unless there is such repentance as makes a change of mind and heart complete, there cannot be the power to forsake sin ; for the repentance which conducts to forgiveness is nothing less than the response to the appeal which Love makes. The vision of the Love which appeals and of the Truth which exposes the darkness of error itself sets the captive free to come to the light. That is the power of God within which Christ releases ; and the response to that appeal of Love is in the energy which faith exerts in coming to the light, loving the light and hating the darkness. Such a response Jesus hailed in every case and sealed it with His word of approval.

So it was in this instance : " Seeing their faith He saith, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee " : or again, as to the woman that was a sinner, " He saith unto

her, thy sins are forgiven thy faith hath saved thee : go in peace."

It was according to this law of Love's working in creating the power of response that Jesus said—"He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that beholdeth me beholdeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world that, whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness." "Yet a little while is the light among you ; walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not while ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may become sons of light."

The coming of Jesus into a dark world was a call and a challenge to all who were lying in the shadow of death to come to the light and claim the heritage of life as God's children. That power which attracted was the power which opened new life to the dying : they hailed it and came to it. Coming to Him they forsook everything which kept them from Him, the fear of evil and thralldom to its claims, the bonds of habit and the tyranny of self-indulgence. The faith which laid hold upon good as the object of supreme value determined them to forsake all that denied and rejected it. It made them one with Him who is life, light and love. Then He could declare what was now the truth, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace." He had evoked the power against which evil is impotent, the love of Good.

Mere forgiveness, apart from love, leaves the sinner unchanged.

In the parable of the wicked servant to whom his master forgave a debt of ten thousand talents, the man of unchanged heart exacts the utmost from his fellow servant. Forgiveness had effected no change. Hence the sentence pronounced was : "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou besoughtest me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."¹

Thus it was that when Jesus dealt with a sinner He kindled that love in the heart which made the old sin hateful and a return to the old life unthinkable. He moved men to repentance. Love was stirred to generous action. It was so in the case of Zacchæus. It constrained him to avow his decision : "the half of my goods I give to the poor : if I have wrongfully exacted I restore fourfold." Such action was the application of the law of love which now he owned to be supreme.

So of the woman that was a sinner. Jesus had made all her life of sin horrible by the vision of abso-

¹ Cf. St. Matt. xviii, 32-35.

lute purity which she had seen in Him. Her perversion of love, which had diverted its rich stream into the desert wastes of self-pleasing, was at last seen in the hideousness of lust. When she saw Love in Him in all its awful purity and truth she beheld the object to which henceforth she must direct her life. Her action, which only Jesus understood, was the expression of her love of good which sealed her rejection of the old life. The new principle was applied, and Jesus hailed it with joy: "I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much. And He said unto the woman, thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace."

The power to forsake sin—how greatly we need it! That power is ours to claim as we let Jesus show to us the Truth in Him and in ourselves. In the Face of Jesus, by the Light of Truth, we may see what our Father wills each one of us to become whom He has made in that same likeness. But we can never know the power unless we come to Him and behold the Good, the True, the Pure. The very coming to Him is our approach to the source of power to forgive; we come to *Love*. And every step in that way of approach brings Love into possession of its own kingdom.

"When thou turn'st away from ill,
Christ is this side of thy hill.
When thou turnest towards Good,

Christ is walking in thy wood.
When thy heart cries 'Father, pardon,'
Then the Lord is in the Garden.
When stern Duty wakes to watch,
Then His Hand is on the latch.
But when hope thy song doth rouse,
Then the Lord is in thy house.
When to love is all thy wit,
Christ doth at thy table sit.
When God's will is thy heart's pole,
Then is Christ thy very soul."
(George MacDonald.)

The power within us to forsake sin is that which Christ alone can stir into a living force. Not only does He unbare sin and make all evil a horror to us ; by showing us the good, the true, the pure He wins us to such a love of what is holy, that we love Him. In stirring such a passion of love to Himself, His own love is poured into our hearts. When that Love has taken the supreme place in our being, then sin can have no abiding place. Then and not till then, can Christ declare the truth for us : " thy sins are forgiven."

Of the reality of the transformation which has been wrought in ourselves we can supply a ready test. If the Love of Christ is established in our hearts as the supreme power there will be a readiness to forgive our fellow men. His Love drew out of even the most worthless folk a power to repent and forsake sin. In every one He saw that which moved

Him to compassion : in His presence love came to life again in the hearts of sinners and they gained a vision of the truth. That power to repent and turn to God is latent in every child that He has made. It is love which alone can stir the smouldering and dying fire into a flame. Our religion can be applied as we put it to the test in our relation to people whom possibly we dislike and with whom we consider that we do well to be angry. Any such idea of right will vanish if we recall the mercy and compassion which God in His Love has showed to us. We shall not find it possible to demand from a fellow servant that he pay all that is due. Something of Christ's own Love will have play within our hearts, and we shall deem none hopeless or incapable of repentance. Our hearts will be the channels through which His Love flows out to them, and that Love will do its healing, transforming work of power ; it will make repentance possible for them as for us.

If we have indeed been won by that Love to forsake sin, the proof of the reality of our repentance will be seen in that practical application of Christ's religion to our own life, that we do forgive them that trespass against us.

It is according to that law that we can judge our state, as the Master has made plain : "if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

CHAPTER IV

THE POWER TO HEAL SICKNESS

“**J**ESUS went about teaching and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people.” Such is the record of the Great Physician.

Teaching truth: preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing all manner of sickness—this was Christ’s constant work. All three activities are intimately related. The truth which He taught was declared in the life which He lived in the world. The Gospel of good news which He preached was the announcement that the Kingdom of God is here, and that His power is within man’s being. The actual demonstration of all this was in the healing of men’s bodies. Christ’s work touched three spheres—spirit, soul, and body, because man’s being is a unity which harmonizes all three. His Gospel was related therefore to all human life, and it met the needs of every human experience.

The Kingdom of God which Christ opened to view was of the unseen Reality finding expression in the

sphere of the seen. It was the sphere in which the spiritual powers of Truth, Love and Life are ever at work to enlighten, enrich and transform all outward things. It was the inner principle which gives meaning to every material appearance.

His distinctive message to men was :

“ This Kingdom of God is within you. In you dwell Spirit, Light, Power. There are hidden resources within your being which link you with the Source of all Truth, Life and Love. There is that within you which is of God, in which you are like your Heavenly Father. I am come to show you what He is like and what you are meant to become. He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Follow Me and possess the Kingdom in which Life is eternal, Truth is invincible and Love is omnipotent. Your true life here and now is to know Him ; it is enjoyed in responding to His Love and in expressing the Truth by obedience to the law of your being. The expression of the truth of being is in likeness to Him who is perfect. The Kingdom over which He reigns is one of Order, Holiness, Perfection. That Kingdom which is within you, He wills to be manifested through you.”

So just as Christ treated sin, as the disorder caused by man's blindness, wilful ignorance and refusal to do God's will ; as He moved men to turn and come back to God and forsake sin, so He dealt with the manifestation of that disorder in the form of sickness

and all manner of disease. While He stripped sin of its monstrous claim to subdue all mankind and challenged its right to an acknowledged sway in human nature, He assailed the long accepted claim of sickness and disease to a place in the order of things created and sustained by God.

Men have held a perverted attitude of mind towards disease as towards sin in the assumption that just as there is an inevitable necessity to yield to sin and to admit the claim of evil to an established right, so disease and sickness represent God's will for man and are sent by Him. This is the rooted belief which mankind has held through long ages. But Christ who came to declare the Father and to make known the Truth met this claim in the most direct and uncompromising method. Whenever He met sickness and disease in any form He rebuked it. He treated it as a usurper and an enemy. He saw in it only the result of disorder, lawlessness, and the breaking of the true law of man's being.

He never regarded sickness as a thing to be tolerated. Always it moved Him to compassion. In compassion He healed all manner of sickness and disease among the people. We have no recorded utterance of His allowing any one to think of sickness as a good, or as something to be accepted as sent by God. On the contrary He spoke of one "whom Satan hath bound" and "who ought to be released."

All kinds of sufferers are described as being held in the grip of evil spirits, whom Jesus rebuked, cast out, and destroyed. He made it plain that to whatever else sickness might be referred, it could not be associated with God or regarded as representing His loving will. When challenged to give proof of the coming of the Kingdom of God in His own person He pointed to the fact that "the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached."

His claim was to be man's Saviour, the Healer of their bodies as well as of their souls. It was for the work of redeeming man's whole nature that Christ came, or as He expressed it, to make a man "every whit whole." This wholeness is a condition of complete accord with the law of his being, in which all the parts are working harmoniously.

In the truth of his being man is possessor of faculties of body, mind and spirit, and, (as we know so much better to-day than ever before), disturbance or obstruction in one part has effects upon every other. And so health has been described as "a balance of thought, feeling and will in giving true expression to all faculties of body, mind and spirit."

Of that perfect "wholeness" of being or health Christ was in His own Person the embodiment. Abiding in oneness of mind and spirit with the Father

in heaven, His Body was the perfect instrument of Spirit's unobstructed working. Through His human faculties He was the channel for the inflow of the transcendent Power which could heal. His Compassion was the sympathetic instrument by which Divine Love found expression. His will, one with the Father's, could declare the truth for all His children. His mind was the undimmed reflector of the eternal Thought of the Infinite Wisdom for all God's creatures. Thus it was that when the sick were brought to Jesus they were in the presence of the One who was in vital touch with the source of all Life, Love and Power. In Him they saw One Who in His own humanity expressed perfect harmony of being, the pattern to which they were to be conformed. The message of His Gospel, (as men listened to Him Who spake as never man spake), was the good news that within them was the power to welcome, respond to and claim the power of the same spirit by which He lived.

As they looked up in His face they saw the very Light of Truth; and there was flashed into their inner consciousness the truth that, as God's children and the objects of His Love, they were created to manifest life in its true, not in its perverted, form. He claimed to speak to His brethren in His Father's name; and His call to them was the summons to believe in God's Love and Truth in spite of all appearances to the contrary and to unite their will

to His. The ideal to which they were to work was perfection of being—and to nothing less. “Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

When such response of faith was made men were healed. They exerted those faculties, though long numbed by disuse, by which they touched the very springs of life. The spiritual powers in them, through the faith, hope and love which was quickened within, reacted to the impact of Love as it met them in the Person of Jesus. In touching Him they made contact, through His Humanity, with that Divine Power which alone makes whole. They touched Him; and lo! that power which was ever ready to proceed from Him was released. “As many as touched were made whole.” It was the touch of faith in the sufferers which put them in contact with that power of Spirit which brought healing. It made them at one in will and desire with Jesus in whom the spirit dwelt “without measure.” By the touch of the spiritual energy of faith in the sufferer that power of which Jesus was the Mediator, was released. Such is the account given in the case of the woman who had an issue of blood twelve years:—“straightway Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power proceeding from him had gone forth, turned him about in the crowd, and said, who touched my garments?”¹

¹ St. Mark v, 30.

It was by no magical touch of a power beyond man's perception ; by no overwhelming display of supernatural force that Jesus healed indiscriminately. No, He won men to trust Him so that they put forth that power, which as possessed of spirit, they had within them. He awoke in them that capacity (no matter for how long a time dormant) which is inherent in all God's children. He helped them to make that venture, which each must dare in response to God, by which men touch the sphere of the Spirit and can be receptive of spiritual power.

Invariably it was this claim to the response of faith which Jesus made. "Wilt thou be made whole?" was the strange question put to the man who had lain helpless for thirty-eight years. At His word, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk," the man put forth the power within, which made him one with the very word of God, expressing His Will: "and straightway the man was made whole."

So, as though ascribing all the result to its originating cause, in addressing the woman who came in the crowd behind and touched Him, He said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."¹

We conclude, therefore, that the power of Jesus to heal was exerted by stirring in sufferers the energetic action of a capacity which was in them, by

¹ St. Mark v, 25, 34.

which they put themselves into harmonious accord with the will and purpose of God Whom He revealed. According to their faith it was done unto them. The only limitation upon that power was that which man himself imposed by refusal to recognise and respond to the vision of Truth and the appeal of Love which He brought them. "He could there do no mighty work because of their unbelief," is the record of what happened in His experience.

Great as is the inherent power in man to be made whole, whenever he supplies the necessary conditions by co-operation with God and in response to Christ's call to follow Him into possession of the Kingdom, he has the awful power to close the door against Him. It is not according to the law of the Kingdom, as Christ revealed it, that God should compel any man to receive any of His gifts ; nor will He do for us that which He has given us the power to do ourselves. In the recorded cases of healing, (which we may assume are typical of His habitual method), Jesus always sought to win those who were in need of healing to exert that spiritual capacity, of which their actions in faith were the expression. For example, to Jairus, when he received the news that his daughter was dead, we read "Jesus, not heeding the word spoken, said, Fear not, only believe."¹ Do not pay credence to the report which reaches you

¹ St. Mark, v 36.

through physical sense ; inhibit the thought of fear : trust Me : lay hold on God and the realities of the spiritual world : “ only believe, and she shall be made whole.”¹

So again to the father of the demented boy, who cried to Him, “ If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us ” ; Jesus said, “ If thou canst ! All things are possible to him that believeth. Straightway the father cried out, and said Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.”²

In a case where the avenues of approach were almost closed, as with the man who was deaf and dumb, Jesus called upon the maimed sufferer to exert the utmost of which he was capable. “ He took him aside privately,” to secure complete concentration of attention. “ He put his fingers into his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue.” Into these physical organs of hearing and speech by touch with Himself He signified that new power was to come. “ Looking up to heaven,” directing his thoughts and desire with His own to the Father, “ He sighed ;” taking a deep breath and opening the mouth, He made the man, (as he evidently did), follow exactly His own example, and say with Him as He spoke the peremptory word of command, “ Eph-pha-tha ! ”—using the explosive sounds which of all others were

¹ St. Luke viii, 50.

² St. Mark, ix, 22, 23.

the simplest for one who had an impediment in his speech to make. The man's faith in Jesus was evidenced by the eagerness with which he followed and responded to every suggestive action. He exerted his limited powers to the utmost of their capacity in absolute obedience, and as a result of his faith "his ears were opened and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain."¹

Of Christ's power to heal sickness and all manner of disease the Gospels are the convincing record. He who once came and dwelt among men to reveal the truth is the same Jesus to-day as yesterday and for ever. He is still the Saviour from sin and the Healer of disease. Through Him we come to the Father for everything that the Father wills to give to His children, to whom His word is, "Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine."

Of that promise to abide with us and to do His works of redemptive power the Commission to His Church is the assurance. "Jesus called unto him his twelve disciples and gave them authority to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness." The terms of the Commission were these: "As ye go, preach, saying the Kingdom of Heaven is here. Heal the sick; . . . freely ye received, freely give." "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and

¹ St. Mark, vii, 32-36.

greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.”¹ “ All power hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I commanded you : and lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world.”²

The question which confronts us is this. Has Christ to-day power on earth to forgive sins and to heal all manner of sickness and disease ?

The answer given will be according to our faith. Do we believe in Christ “ the Living One,” “ the Same Jesus ” to-day as ever, the Revelation of the Truth which is eternal ? or do we account Him, (as the men of His own day), just “ as one of the prophets,” a man whose life two thousand years ago is now a memory, and whose work ended in ignominious failure ?

There are those who tell us that a literal interpretation of the Gospels is an untrue interpretation, and that the expectation of healing by spiritual means to-day is a recrudescence of superstition ; that the display of Christ’s power to heal is to be seen and

¹ St. John xiv, 12-14.

² St. Matt. xxviii, 18-20.

honoured in the slow march of medical science, and in no other way. In the mind of the mass of Christian men there still remains the belief, (not in any way reconciled with their practice), that sickness and disease are sent by God, and are part of His ordering. We do not expect Christ to heal and we do not therefore as our first impulse in the hour of need pay any attention to Christ's word—"Bring him hither to Me."

As a consequence to-day, as when Jesus was here, the disciples of the Lord are taunted with failure,—“I brought him to thy disciples and they could not cast him out.” Is there any doubt that the same answer would be given to the question, “Why could not we cast him out?” but that which Christ gave: “Because of your little faith. . . . If ye have faith . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you.”

In making that demand for faith, as we have seen, Jesus called for the exercise of that spiritual power which is in every man, by which he puts himself in touch with the Unseen and allies himself with God in holding His thought and in doing His will. All Christ's education of His disciples was directed to help them to understand this underlying principle and to make real to themselves the Truth which alone can set them free from the pressure of things seen and material. In Himself He showed them the secret of the Power which can transform life, and by

which He was master in the house of His own being. It was His unbroken union with the Father in heaven. His education of us is to conduct us into possession of the same truth, viz., that there are *within us*, as spiritual beings, powers unseen and unexplored which, (if exerted and applied), bring us into vital touch with God Himself. That which is of God within us is not so much life-force stored up and of limited amount ; it is that by which we establish contact with Life Itself and open our being for the vital stream to flow into us and through us. It is that by which we can be one with Christ Himself, and so be in harmony with the Law of all Being, which is " wholeness."

It is a power capable of infinite increase, and it is latent in every one. Christ expected to find it even in the most unlikely people, and it moved Him to indignant surprise when He missed it in those who claimed to have any knowledge of God and the things of the spirit. Can we imagine that He expects any thing less to-day ? In all the enterprises of spiritual experience the law holds good universally : " According to your faith so be it done unto you." It is done according to our faith. If we are to " live by faith," " walk by faith," we must have a constant conviction that the powers that are spiritual are within us, and are available to supply our need. To treat them as non-existent, is to place a credulous confidence only in what is seen and material. This

is mainly our attitude towards what is called "Spiritual Healing" to-day.

But when once the eyes of spiritual understanding are opened we shall know, according to the mind of Christ, that the evil which confronts us, either in the shape of disease of body or of moral perversion, is but the expression of the disorder which creeps in to a world from which God is excluded. When evil confronts us in any shape it will be a challenge to link ourselves with that Power of Omnipotent Love which belongs to the Source of all good. We shall not engage in the conflict single-handed, but in the fellowship which unites those whom faith in God makes one. Then every means which His Love has provided, physical or mental, will be brought to the service of Spirit, and we shall set ourselves to achieve that holiness—wholeness—perfection of being, which is the heritage of all God's children. Then we shall hail as King Him whose Love and Power is manifested in making man "every whit whole."

If this is to be achieved by us we must, resolutely and as a united body of believers in Christ, set ourselves to exercise those capacities of spiritual energy by which we can rise to that level of understanding at which we can be in vital touch with Him who makes whole. The task which we set before us is no less than to let God manifest Himself in us and have unhindered working through us. When we surrender

mind and body to be the instruments of His Purpose we put ourselves in contact with the Creative Life, and the power of Christ to heal can then be released as surely to-day as when on earth those who touched Him were made whole.

In seeking to have "the mind of Christ" as our governing principle we shall indeed be bringing our religion into vital application to life; we shall press on to the spiritual achievement which crowns faith's victorious enterprise:

"Then good shall ever conquer ill;
Health walk where pain hath trod.
As a man thinketh, so is he—
Rise, then, and think with God."

CHAPTER V

THE POWER TO CAST OUT FEAR

THE Personality of Jesus has such an attraction for us because in Him we behold the manifestation of a complete mastery over all the conditions of our life which usually strike fear into our hearts, and with which we feel impotent to contend. In Him fear had no place. Unique among men, He moved about the World confronting every circumstance and condition of human experience with absolute fearlessness. The secret of this immunity from that which usually affects all men so disastrously was His unbroken consciousness of oneness with His Father unseen. He lived in the realization of the truth of the Son's relationship to His Father, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Abiding in this union with God, free from that fear, which "of all base passions is the most accurst," Jesus stood forth in the perfection of manhood. It moved men's wonder to be with Him in circumstances of danger. He was at sea in a storm, with fishermen inured to danger; yet while they cried out for fear, He was the only

one present who remained unmoved. "Why are ye fearful?" was His word of reproach as He rebuked the storm, and there was a great calm. They were no sooner on land than there met them a man possessed, whom no man could tame, a terror to the whole country side. Jesus alone could calm him and set him free; and when he was found by the terrified people sitting clothed and in his right mind, it was they who were afraid. Faced by envy, hatred and malice, Jesus was ever unmoved, patient and supreme. Though surrounded by a hostile crowd of angry critics, Jesus calm and serene went on with His work, doing good and teaching Truth. His word on all occasions, whether to the trembling friends of the dying or to sufferers who had lost all hope, was in this characteristic message: "Fear not; be of good cheer; It is I; be not afraid."

Finally, on the Cross we see how He faced that which men fear even more than death—failure, ignominious and complete. He remains constant to His purpose and victorious through love as He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "Into thy Hands I commend my spirit." The consciousness of His unbroken fellowship with God unseen was the secret of the Life, which, while it seemed to remove Him from man, made all men recognise the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. Failure and an ignominious death had no terrors for Him who, "having loved his own which

were in the world, loved them unto the end." Perfect love cast out all fear.

That sovereign power of Christ was demonstrated in His dealings with those who were the victims of fear. In every case He sought to effect in them a transformation of that condition of mind in which their fears were rooted. Fear ever has its seat in the mind.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The thoughts to which we give place, in response to the appeals and threats which outward things make, give to fear its power. The root of our trouble is a material mindedness which survives the wreck even of materialism itself. The gulf which really affects our thinking and living is that which comes between the spiritual value of life which we profess to believe in and a personal relationship to God who is Spirit, of which, in practice at least, we tend to fight shy. We are in fact always "minding the things of the flesh," because, as Saint Paul says, we are of those who are "after the flesh."

If men comply with the demands of their lower nature, their thoughts are shaped by that nature, and thoughts so held in the mind mean death. "The mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be."

In this ground plot of wrong, false and impious thinking grows the poisonous root of fear. Thoughts running riot, imaginations owning no control and at the mercy of the phantoms of evil suggestion are always enmity against God. They are the negation of God's very Being and Power. They are not subject to His law of love, neither indeed can be. Always fear rests on a perverted idea of God and is unbelief in His Sovereignty.

The very first account of it is given to us in the story of Adam. He first surrendered to the insinuation of the devil not to trust God, saying, "yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden? Ye shall not die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof ye shall be as God." It was the temptation not to believe in God, the Giver of all Good, but rather to believe in that which is seen to be "good for food a delight to the eyes to be desired to make one wise." In surrendering to that belief man is driven to hide himself from God in fear, and in the sequel he can only plead, "I was afraid and hid myself."

That is to be "after the flesh" and to have "the mind of the flesh."

As the Author of Wisdom describes it: "Wickedness, condemned by a witness within, is a coward thing, and being pressed hard by conscience forcasteth always the worst lot. For fear is nothing else but a surrender of the succours which reason

offereth." Like sin, fear will be destroyed only by being understood. Stripped of its imposture by reason, it will then be seen in the light of truth to be an unreal phantom, the creation of a deceived mind.

It is this work of redemption which Christ alone has power to achieve. His message to the fearful and unbelieving was ever the same. "Fear not—Be not afraid. It is I." He brought the good news of God, ever present with us and in us, Who is Love, apart from Whom is no power, reality, nor intelligence: and His invitation was to trust, to believe in and to apply the Power which is unseen, divine and spiritual. All down man's history this has been the discovery which has delivered man from fear. Like a golden thread it runs through all God's revelation of Himself. "I am in the midst of thee. Fear not: I am with thee." "Thou art Mine—thou shall not fear evil any more." "Fear not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God." "The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, a Mighty One who shall save—He will rejoice over thee with joy."

"The Lord is my shepherd . . . ; I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." This is the truth which was finally declared in Jesus. His life was lived on this foundation of faith in the Father in heaven, and He manifested its power by putting

it to the extreme test of death and failure. In that faith He lived, by it He laid down His life, and through it He passed victoriously to the Life, risen and triumphant. In all circumstances and under all conditions He made it plain : Love is omnipotent. Nothing can kill Love. Love abideth : Love never faileth. It is Love which casts out fear.

Does it seem then too good to be true that the power is available for us which Christ showed in action in every state of life which man can experience ; whether confronted by disease, hunger and storms at sea, or by the violence of a raging mob crying, " Crucify," or in beholding friends forsaking and fleeing ? Nay, it is to the conviction of the reality of that Power of Divine Love which is one with us, whenever we call upon it, and which will never forsake us, to which we must rise.

God is in the midst of us. He is in us, not a far-off, distant, unrecognisable Force, but as closely and intimately as thought is to mind, as a ray of light is to the sun, or as the breath we breathe is to the winds of heaven. Jesus did not reflect any visible appearance of His Father, but He made Him real to men as Love, Truth, Life are realisable values. All that in Christ we see, that God *is*. All that Christ ever did He lives still to do. All that he ever called men to become, that He now bids us be. We too can say : " The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith

in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for Me." "In all things I have learned the secret. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me."

The proving and applying of this power is the joyous adventure upon which every true Christian is embarked. Our religion is proved to be the power for all life's needs as it is applied, for as we follow Christ He leads us out of the false belief in the power of evil into the understanding of the supremacy of Good. According to His demand the old "self" must be "denied" which has been formed on the belief in the permanent reality of the appearances, so frightening to the physical senses; the new principle of love, defined by His Cross, as it is daily taken up, must be applied to life's concerns; and Christ, "the Truth," must be followed as He leads us into that world which is ruled by His Mind and Spirit. Then in that kingdom of spiritual reality, His disciples in their true home, will find abundant life. But the discovery will only be made as the result of a resolute denial of the fearful suggestions conveyed by the senses. The torture in the mind which fear inflicts is generally due to allowing the imagination to use the materials, supplied by sight or hearing, out of which to weave a horror. As we give thoughts of the power of evil the hospitality of our minds they grow in power and only grip with more tenacious talons. What the mind feeds upon,

it creates, for all thoughts have creative power. By feeding upon fearful thoughts we become a prey to fear and we inevitably propagate its pestilential seeds. The thing we greatly fear will then certainly come upon us. This habit of investing difficulties with added terrors is known as making mountains out of molehills, and there are ranges of such mountains which only await Love's coming to be cast into the sea of oblivion.

We may recall the description of Mr. Fearing in *Pilgrim's Progress* who, after great difficulty, at last got across the Slough of Despond. When across it, he only found greater terrors awaiting him in the darkness of the forest and the roughness of the road. "He had, I think, a Slough of Despond in his mind, a slough that he carried everywhere with him; otherwise he could not have been such as he was."

What shall we do then?

First, refuse to give fearful thoughts and suggestions of any kind a resting place; refuse them the hospitality of your mind. Having done this, meet the evil suggestion with the positive truth, and affirm strongly: "God is here. I am His child, all that He has is mine to claim. There is no power but of God. All power in heaven and on earth is in Christ. I am in Him, and He dwells in me.

I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. None can pluck me out of my Father's Hand."

It is here that the battle must be fought—in *the mind*. And we must hold the ground with the tenacity of faith in Truth. Hold yourself in His Presence Who is Truth. Confidently affirm: "Thou, O God, art with me. In Thee I live and move and have my being. I am Thine. I am called by thy Name. With Thy favourable loving kindness Thou wilt defend me as with a shield. I am at this moment one with Omnipotent Love, for God is Love. With God all things are possible. I meet now every appearance of danger with God—without any fear. The difficulty will soon disappear, as mist before the sunrise. I shall soon look back on this experience with a thankful heart and praise God for the deliverance from this and every fear."

This is in fact only to apply your religion. It is to realise the Presence of God, and to "commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still." It is the call to steep your mind in the thought of God's Presence with you at all times, and to let your mind reflect that thought constantly.

Then, in order to let the Truth possess your mind, seek to find the Living Lord in the written word. Study the facts recorded. Ponder what His Love

has done for you, as revealed in Christ, in His Incarnation, Passion and Triumph. "If ye abide in my Word, then are ye truly my disciples," Christ said. And such abiding will involve being still and knowing the Truth. Secure the conditions for a quiet mind as you let it just reflect the Truth about Himself which is pictured in the Word of God. "It is written!" thrice repeated by our Lord to the tempter, was the sword of the spirit which put the enemy to flight. So let the mind picture, for example, Jesus asleep in the boat, the storm raging, the alarm of the disciples which proved so groundless. Hear Him say, "Why are ye so fearful? I am here. Peace, be still." Realise, that is, make real to yourself, the fact that Jesus, the same Lord, is revealing the truth of *what you are*, that you are God's child, made in His likeness, one with the Perfect Son of God and *He is in you*. Let Him do His own work—calming, soothing your nerves, quieting your restless mood, ordering and controlling the whole house of your being. Say to yourself, "This is the place of His own choosing: here He dwells who has a delight to be with His own. He is now possessing my mind, flooding my heart, inspiring my spirit. He is saying I will not leave you comfortless; I come to you. I welcome Him and say I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof; but, Lord, Thou art come; speak the word only, and thy servant shall be made whole. There is no fear in love; but

perfect love—Christ's Love in me—casteth out fear. His faithfulness and truth shall be my shield and buckler. I shall not be afraid for any terror."

It is Christ who helps us to come to our true self ; to know what we are ;—sons of God whom the Father holds in the Arms of Omnipotent Love. It is fear which blinds us and so reduces us to impotence.

How truly such words as these strike home :

" Alas ! it is the baseness of thy fear
That makes thee strangle thy propriety,
Fear not, Cæsario ; take thy fortunes up ;
Be that thou know'st thou art, and then thou art
As great as that thou fear'st."¹

" Be that thou know'st thou art ! " Come to your true self. Be in fact what you are ; and then you meet an appearance with the reality, a false accuser's threat with the confidence of a rightful heir, the devil's lie with God's Truth, and the truth shall make you free.

¹ *Twelfth Night*, Act V, 1.

CHAPTER VI

THE POWER TO ENLIGHTEN THE MIND

THE longer Jesus moved among men, the more apparent became the gulf which separated Him from them. In His life and by His teaching He was unfolding the hidden meaning and the underlying principle of His kingdom. He was making God real to men as He manifested life in a human personality filled with spirit. Into possession of this Kingdom He invited men to follow Him. He showed how all the disorder in the world was the expression of rebellion against the true law of man's being, and the result of failure to respond to the supreme claims of Spirit. The power to transform life and to make it new, (just as the power to mar and pervert it), came, He taught, from within—from wrong, disloyal thinking.

As the spiritual significance of Christ's Gospel was unfolded, He only encountered a settled attitude of resistance, an unaccountable density of perception and an extraordinary facility in perverting the meaning of His message. Men were so deeply bedded in their old belief that the measure of values was to be

found only in things seen and material, that they would not, and so could not, see the Light which shone to them from Himself. His power to heal was ascribed to Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils. His power to forgive sin was denounced as blasphemy. His warning that failure to follow Him into the Kingdom ruled by spirit meant death in sin,—(as when He said : “whither I go, ye cannot come,”)—only provoked the taunt, “will he kill himself?” The gulf which separated them was inevitable and complete. It was in the mind. He and they belonged to different regions ; the spring of their life and the sphere of their thoughts were separated from His by an infinite chasm. As Jesus Himself described it, “Ye are from beneath : I am from above. Ye are of this world : I am not of this world.” “Ye judge after the flesh.”

The distinction lay in the attitude of mind towards the same objects. To Christ everything which God has made is good, and its goodness consists in its capacity to serve the true end of life. He regarded everything and all persons in their true light, for He saw them only in relation to God and His purpose. Persons and things were never ends in themselves, nor were they conceived of as possessing value apart from God and the spiritual purpose which underlay the appearance. All things were vehicles of the spirit and means by which, through every avenue of his being, man becomes aware of the presence of God

Unseen. They were the expressions of the thoughts of the mind of God. To be in the state of consciousness where this was seen and known was to be living "from above" in a sphere "not of this world." By contrast, those who would not receive Him were living "from beneath"; deferring to the claims of the senses and counting things and persons as ends in themselves, they proclaimed themselves to be "of this world."

The world which Jesus had to overcome was what has been described as "the mental world; the generally accepted false standard of relation between man and his fellow men; the fog darkening inward vision; the temper of materialism and the worship of force; the tradition that physical might is the only right, a tradition which down the ages has raised Empires by brute force."

The superhuman task to which Jesus dedicated Himself was to extricate man from this tangle of perverted thinking by bringing enlightenment to his mind, so held in the grip of error that all understanding of truth was darkened. With increasing foresight He recognized that the deliverance of man from this material-mindedness would involve nothing less than the supreme sacrifice of Himself. So He foretold, "the Son of Man must suffer." "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am, and that I do nothing of myself, but as

the Father taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me; . . . for I do always the things that are pleasing to him."

That life which is "from beneath" and all that emanates from being "of this world" should be brought to the test of this judgment. It should run its course to its conclusion. It should lift Him up upon a Cross; and then through men's rejection of Him should be seen the stark madness of what they were choosing. Evil should work its own destruction, as it ever does. They should be compelled to look on Him whom they had pierced, and they should be haunted by that Figure to the end of time. In that vision they should know that Love can never be destroyed. He who should look down upon them from that Cross should confront them for ever as "the Living One," whom no death could hold captive. From that throne He would draw them. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself." "Then shall ye know that I am." So He foretold. The event has proved it.

That lifting up of Jesus upon the Cross has revealed, as no spoken words could ever declare, what man does in rejecting God and the life which is from above. All the sinfulness of sin is there laid bare. All that cruelty, lust, brute force, envy, jealousy and passion can do it did in its decision to destroy Jesus. It is seen at Calvary in its blind rage destroying all that is best, most beautiful and true.

But all in vain. The Victim of man's rejection remains untouched, unbroken, unchanged. The tomb might be sealed which held His body, but He rises victorious the third day. With Him Truth emerges triumphant.

No power of this world can destroy Love: no power from beneath can touch spirit. All that sin can do is to be confronted with its impotence to escape the judgment of the good which it seeks to destroy.

Thus it is that in Jesus lifted up upon the Cross men are compelled to behold Him whom they have pierced and to recognise the Victory of the Love which is free, (even there), to express its omnipotence. There, as upon the earth, the Crucified preserves unbroken His union with His Father in heaven. To the last He speaks what He has heard with the Father. He accomplishes that which is pleasing to Him. He is sustained throughout His Agony by the consciousness that "He that sent me is with me, for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him."

There in the uplifted, invincible Christ men see God reigning from the tree. That which in all His Life Jesus had declared of Love in working He compelled them to see upon the Cross. There He staked all upon Love's supreme venture, and magnificently He prevailed. Jesus had made God real to men by bringing the world of Spirit, that which is "from above" "and not of this world," into touch with

life at the earth level. While He lived among those who are "from beneath" and "are of this world," they remained blind to the glory of the Kingdom which He manifested. Men could not accept God in the likeness of Christ, for they demanded a God who was the embodiment of a power that is terrible. To them the weakness of One who was meek and humble and a servant of servants was a scandal and folly. But here upon the Cross He is seen to be the same and His deed is of a piece with all that ever He did. That deed is not, as He claimed, to be distinguished from God's own action. "I do nothing of myself but as the Father taught me, I speak these things. He that sent me is with me: he hath not left me alone, for I do always the things that are pleasing to him."

The confirmation and authoritative pledge of that Divine approval came with the event which followed the Crucifixion, by which this same Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." As His disciples were never weary of reminding their enemies, "Ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and called for a murderer to be given unto you, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses."

In this vision of the triumph of Love is the power to draw men who are "of this world" and "from

beneath " to Him who is " not of this world " because He is " from above." " I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself," remains still the promise which offers hope to mankind.

From hence streams the Light which, while it throws into deepest gloom the darkness " of this world " and all life lived " from beneath," is the compelling, attractive force which draws men in every age. That which can enlighten the mind is from Him who shined in our hearts to give the light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. In that light alone is our hope to see light.

All man's hope is to rise to that level of consciousness at which we can know the truth; and to that level Christ is ever drawing us as we will yield to the attraction of divine Love. In Him is the power to lift us out of the mental state in which we are the prey to the delusive claims and the fleeting conditions of this world. He raises us up to the sphere of that companionship with Himself in which life is the true son's life in the Father's Presence, where He is ever with us and where we may do always the things that are pleasing to Him.

Let us not think that this is a call to an impossible venture. God's calls are to His children whom He has endowed with the capacity to fulfil the purpose for which He has given them life.

The Christ who has risen is He who is for ever Love, and He lives to supply that which meets every human need. "I will draw *all men* unto myself." His love embraces all men wherever they be, at whatever low levels of thinking and however deeply sunk they may be in the entanglements of this world. The Risen Lord is the same to-day as yesterday, and two thousand years ago; and His call is the same: "Come unto Me"; "Follow Me"; "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be." "Yet a little while is the light with you, walk while ye have the light that darkness overtake you not. While ye have the light believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light."

It is the call of the victorious Christ to share His Mind, to know the Truth which He manifests and to be with Him in heart and mind and will where He is. It is the call to let that mind be in us which is in Christ Jesus. Saint Paul's way of putting it is: "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The renewing of the mind means finding the centre of thinking in things above, and not letting the mind derive all its impression from "the things that are upon the earth," at the dictate of the senses and in servile surrender to the claims "of this world" and its standards.

From beneath and of ourselves we cannot change

our minds or heart at will: but minds, hearts and wills are capable of change. That, thank God, is not an impossibility. But it means that minds, hearts and wills must come under other influences and be subject to attractive forces of another sort. That which will change them and draw them is the power which Love alone can exert. That power is in Him who is the living magnet to attract all men unto Himself.

His constant and universal appeal is this: "Change your minds: think from above: rise to possess the Kingdom which is not of this world. Share My thoughts: let My mind be in you, so that through your minds you may reflect the Truth which makes you free." That is the great discovery to be made. Changed minds will produce transformed lives and will create new conditions. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." No man is doomed to remain at the mercy of conditions created by false standards of thinking. The direction of the thoughts of our mind is a matter of our own choice. We have the power within us to let that mind of Christ be the directing, inspiring and creative principle. We have the power to decide whether thoughts of this world, derived from the impressions made upon our senses by things seen, shall occupy and rule our minds; or whether thoughts which reflect the Mind of Christ shall govern our thinking. It is a matter of individual choice. We are responsible for our thoughts, because we can choose in which

direction to look for inspiration. We cannot prevent thoughts of all kinds coming to our minds, but we can either deny or offer them hospitality.

We do, as a matter of fact, think *from beneath* or *from above*: we collect the materials on which to fashion our ideas, either from the plane of this world or from the sphere which is not of this world. We can therefore yield ourselves to Him who has power to raise us up to that level of mind and heart at which the vision of Reality becomes possible. We may set our minds, as the Apostle bids us, on "things above, where Christ is."

To say that we **may** do this is to affirm that everything for our life depends upon our doing so. Life depends upon knowing and understanding Truth.

"This is life eternal that they may know thee the only God and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

In Jesus lifted up upon the Cross we may come to an apprehension of what is the breadth and length and depth and height of the purpose of God in sending Him to dwell among us, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and so be filled unto all the fulness of God.

We may come to such knowledge of reality! Yes. But that arrival can only be through our willingness to let thought travel along the lines which ascend from the earth level. A point of vantage must be

won by climbing to a height from whence we can survey life as we are living it in the world. To share Christ's Mind we must let Him draw us to the sphere from whence He ever looks down upon the world in its disorder. From His Cross He beholds men and women the slaves of animal passions, blinded by hatred, envy, and fear. But beyond all that evil appearance He sees them as they are in the Mind of His Father. That idea in the Divine Mind is the only substantial reality, grossly perverted and distorted as man has made it. He wills us to gain that vision, and so to cross the gulf which wrong thinking has fixed between us and Him.

The gulf is there, a chasm which seems impassable. But though God is in heaven and man upon earth, man is meant for God and heaven is his true home. Man has it in him, (just because he is the expression on earth of the thought of the Eternal Mind of God), to rise to the understanding of Truth. Because he is God's child, he can recognise and measure the gulf which separates him, in that far country where he is in want, from his Father's home "where hired servants have bread enough and to spare." He can come to himself because there is a self which can never rest content with husks and the company of swine. Nothing will so draw him out of this famine-stricken life as to confront in all its brutal truth the measure of the sin of choosing to live from beneath and of rejecting life from above

But if that vision is to be ours by which transformation through the renewing of the mind is wrought, we must give our minds the chance to rise. Of deliberate choice we must set our minds on things above, where Christ is. We must snatch time out of the welter of life here to let the truth as it is in Jesus possess us, and so work in us that enlightening of the mind which will bring

“ The grace thy Passion merited
Hatred of self and love of thee.”

The conditions under which the mind can be renewed are indeed at our disposal. It is for us to secure them so that He the very Truth and the Life Indeed may draw us unto Himself. Then shall we know even as we are known.

CHAPTER VII

THE POWER FOR LIFE IN SOCIETY

“ **W**E must apply the principles of Christ to our national life” said Lord Selborne in 1917, during the darkest hours of the War: and he voiced a conviction which awoke a responsive echo in countless hearts. When we emerged from that ghastly experience, we hoped that we should never return to the state into which we had drifted before 1914. But the amazing thing is that with all the repulsion against such inhuman and unchristian ways of living which that grim experience created, we seem to be rapidly forgetting the lesson. In many ways the world we are living in is a worse and not a better world.

And yet the challenge remains the same: if we would escape dire disaster we must apply the principles of Christ to our social life. By “our social life” we mean our way of living in relation to our fellow men. The Social question, then, cannot be avoided.

At the outset let us be clear in our minds that

Christ did come into the world to show us the way of living together in society. It is not generally admitted that he did.

Indeed, many people persist in asserting that His principles are meant to apply only to individuals in their personal lives and in their domestic relationships. They draw a sharp line of distinction between the life of the individual and the organised life of society. Economic efficiency and the organisation of productive power is held to be the primary function of society, and the judgment of its soundness therefore is to be decided not upon moral principles but upon the economic results achieved.

This is a conception of society which the Christian cannot possibly accept. Christianity regards society not as a machine, but as "an association of men, whose ultimate aim is to develop the Christian spirit, and by its constraining power to transform all human life until it is the realised expression of the Kingdom of God upon earth."

It is quite true that Christ addressed Himself first to the individual. He chose individuals: He dealt with men individually and He attached them to Himself as His disciples. But He led each disciple to realise that the value of his individual self was to be found by so completely giving that self, that he might serve the common good. He never gave colour to the idea that there could be any "saving" of self apart from others. A man

could only save his life by "losing" it. Thus Christ's gospel to the individual was : " Find your true self by losing self : he that would lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall find it." All was to be for His sake and the Gospel's. And the Gospel was for the whole world. It was of the Kingdom of God on earth, of the honour of the King and the welfare of all His subjects that He was thinking. It was the Kingdom that He opened to the vision of individuals, who were only blind to its presence in their midst because they were so self-centred and so absorbed in their own interests. In giving them that vision He set men to train themselves for the great enterprise of establishing His Kingdom until it should embrace the world. Their aim could be nothing less than the transformation of all life when once they came to think of the world and of society as the Divine Teacher unfolded the Mind of God. There remained no doubt as to His Father's purpose.

Did He not treat all men as members of God's Family ? Did He not teach men to pray and work for the coming of His Kingdom on earth ; did He not declare that it was already here on earth and in men ?

If He did—and most certainly He did—then He made plain the divine purpose for the world. Men were to live together, loving God and loving their neighbours : such was Christ's Gospel and it was essentially a social Gospel. If we regard Him as our Master,

we cannot fail to know that the only social security for men rests upon obedience to those principles of selfless service of which His whole life was the expression. Could He possibly have made His teaching plainer ? “ Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister ; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant : even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Christ's gospel is indeed good news for men and women living together in society, or it is no gospel for mankind. Its acceptance can mean nothing less than the transformation of all social relations.

There can be no room for doubt in any mind that the characteristic principle of Christianity is brotherhood ? What else could Jesus mean when He said, “ All ye are brethren One is your Father in Heaven. . . . One is your Master, even the Christ ” ?

If love is the law of life in man's relation to his Father in heaven, it must be the governing principle of all his relationships to his brethren on earth.

“ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. . . . thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

“ All things, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them : for this is the law and the prophets ! ”

Without question a Christian must love his neighbour *as himself*, because he is his brother. He is not to regard any other person as an instrument to serve his own selfish interests, but to consider his brother's interests and well-being as he considers his own. This is the law of love in the family of the One Father which is in heaven, and it must govern all its social relations.

Nor is this all. Christ brought a fuller meaning into the law of Brotherhood than ever it had been capable of under the law and the prophets.

Into the meaning of the brotherhood of men we have received overwhelming insight as we are taught by the Master that He counts the very least among us as His own brethren. Our Master is also our very Brother. What He understood the law of Brotherhood to be in practical application to human relationships He made absolutely plain. The standard of loving our neighbour was raised to the highest conceivable level, so that the old precept became a new command.

“A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.”

“Even as I have loved you” ! that remains the decisive standard for all His disciples.

To make His Life's message transparently plain He chose at His final parting from them a method of teaching which could not fail to impress the dullest scholar. One by one He washed their feet, and then said : " Ye call me Master and Lord : and ye say well ; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you. . . . If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."

By taking our nature upon Him, Jesus the Christ has made it sacred for every man born of woman. Humanity is the very vesture in which the divine spirit is clothed. He has taught us to look up to the Father in heaven and to know Him not only as His Father but as "our Father." He has not been ashamed to call us brethren.

Nay, the mystery of this relationship goes even deeper. We are to regard all men as a very part of Himself : in the very least of them we are to see the Christ. Services rendered to them are counted as loving ministries done to Himself. " In as much as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

Thus it is that all relationships of men in society are, in the Christian conception, governed by the idea that we are all bound together as " the brethren for whom Christ died."

So there has emerged the distinctive Christian doctrine of the Brotherhood of man. It is upon this principle of our relationship in the Family of God that St. Paul bases all his moral teaching, as, for example, when he says : " Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye truth each one with his neighbour : for we are members one of another. . . . Let him that stole steal no more : but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need. Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, . . . that it may give grace to them that hear. . . . Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you with all malice : and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."¹

We are members one of another ; therefore we must reverence and honour every brother : he is " the brother for whose sake Christ died." So the Apostle enforces the lesson. To wound a weak brother's conscience is a grievous wrong, for " thus sinning against the brethren ye sin against Christ."

Here then is the elementary duty of love and justice. Each brother has the right to equality of treatment, for even the least is of equal value in the Father's eyes with the rest of the family. " To us there is but one God, even the Father, of whom

¹ Eph. iv, 25-32.

are all things and we by him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through him."

"Owe no man anything, but to love one another" is therefore the final expression of the Christian law.

Love is the debt which we owe in justice to one another. It is not a favour bestowed in condescension upon inferiors. It is the least which each child in the family has a right to expect from his brethren, for "ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus . . .," "ye are all one man in Christ Jesus."

It is upon this principle that Christ our Master enforces the truth of our responsibility for our brethren. The Christian society owes the duty of service to the weakest and least of its members. Nay, it is a sacred duty to succour and help them.

The joys and the sorrows, the misfortunes and the unexpected recoveries of the family are the concern of all. The elder brother who never transgressed a commandment is expected to share his father's joy in welcoming back the younger son who had wasted his substance in riotous living. "It was meet to make merry and be glad," is the Father's reproof, "for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

The privileged Dives is judged to have failed because he owned no responsibility to share his good things with "the beggar, full of sores who was laid

at his gate and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table." All wealth and all "goods" are to be held as trust for the good of the Father's family. None are owners: all are stewards. Material possessions are only the means for the enjoyment of true and full life, which can never be experienced by individuals in isolation, but only in fellowship with their brethren.

If men's hearts are centred on their private interests and are not exercised in loving their Father in heaven and their brothers upon earth, they will ruin the whole meaning and joy of living together. They will never find satisfaction in material things. They will certainly never have enough of them. For what such people count enough is always what has been described as "a little more than they have already got!" On self interested principles they will never have enough to spare for the rest of the family!

There is enough in the manifest injustices and inequalities of life to stir our consciences and to rebuke any sense of complacency with the existing state of society. The continuance of conditions of living for our brethren which make decent and honourable life impossible; the persistence of glaring inequalities between the privileged and unprivileged, between the educated and the uneducated, are a perpetual challenge to Christians to make a determined attempt to apply religion to our social relations.

The remembrance of Christ's first coming into our world (—so hard and cold that there was no room even in an inn for Him to be born—), must make it impossible for us to regard with indifference or to treat with apathy the social conditions which prevail in our day, out of which loom those problems of housing the poor, of educating the children or finding work for the unemployed.

Great and insoluble as these problems may appear, the word "impossible" can never be tolerated by the Christian. Only the worst enemies to society persist in declaring that human nature cannot change, and that what has been must continue to be.

It is folly to say that human nature cannot change, for it is perpetually changing. The history of civilization is little else but the history of man's increasing regard for the rights of his fellow men: and the greatest reformers have ever been those who gave their lives in the service of their neglected brethren, as they taught the great Christian doctrine of Service. As Lord Justice Sankey lately said, "the present age more than ever needs the preaching of that doctrine."

The encouraging feature in face of so much that depresses is the fact that all reforms in our present system—(and there have been many)—have been effected by appeals addressed to the moral sense of the community, which awoke response in the con-

sciences of men. It is never hopeless to make appeals to that sense of right and justice which makes all men kin, for the underlying truth about society is that it is plastic and can be changed whenever its mental attitude is changed. We are fully aware that no outward adjustments can by themselves bring in the Kingdom of God. There are no mechanical contrivances by which the evil spirits of fear and suspicion, selfishness and ill will can be exorcised. There are no short cuts to the heavenly state. Legislation may help, and various alleviations of the maladies from which society suffers can be devised and applied. But Love alone can prevail to conquer selfishness : only a passion for justice and goodness is powerful enough to drive out greed and love of gain. Love is strong enough, and Love is here for Christ is here. He is in every one of His brethren ; He is yearning to be set free to do His own transforming work, and He wills to do it in and through each one of us, though we be the least among men. He will do it, if we will but give Him room in our hearts. It is that giving Christ room within us to do His work which is our practical concern.

There is a true saying, current among the Friends : " You cannot make the world better than you are yourself." That surely means that social reform waits for each Christian to bring his religion to

apply to his daily relations with his fellow men.

Whenever you refuse to act from self interested motives : whenever you decline to assert self in deference to another's need : whenever you forego something which you habitually count as your right : whenever you give self away : then you definitely make a step forward as a disciple of Jesus Christ. You take your stand then on Love's principle : you bring your religion to apply to life. Then you supply the essential condition in which He can work. You may wait in confident expectation for the fruit of Love's working. *HE* will do it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POWER FOR MARRIED LIFE

OUR Lord Jesus Christ raised the conception of life in every human relationship to a level never conceived before. Coming not to destroy but to fulfil, He brought new and richer meaning into old and fundamental relationships. Of all human relationship the most wonderful and sacred is that which is realised in Marriage.

Christ's teaching about this relationship was based upon the original intention of God in creating man. "He which made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the twain shall become one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

So He defined the divine purpose in the creation of sex. It was to achieve the completeness of man's being by the co-operation of male and female in perfect harmony of body, mind and spirit. This declaration definitely implied the permanence of the relationship. The very continuance of the race was

made from the beginning to depend upon male and female becoming "one flesh." It is this permanent joining of two lives which constitutes marriage. It is the union of two "lives"; and for human beings, made in the image and likeness of God, "the life" of each means the whole personality.

Of that complete union of two lives the sexual relationship in marriage is the consummating expression. It is for this reason that it has been truly said, "unless two people are prepared to join their lives—which means marriage,—it can never be right that they should consummate their love."¹

The sexual relation between a man and a woman is but the physical expression of a moral and spiritual union of two "lives," and it involves the whole being of each.

"It is the natural consummation of love, and it sets a sacramental seal upon it. It is for this reason that this experience can only be right in marriage. It does involve a man's whole being, and he who would enjoy a woman and give her less than his whole being, is disjointing things which God has joined."²

It is upon the Christian conception of life that the idea of Christian marriage as "holy" is based. The meaning of "life" for man has been vastly enriched by the event of the Incarnation. That

¹ Herbert Gray, "Marriage and Morality Papers," No. 3.

² *Ibid.* pp. 10, 11.

event has been the coming of God into intimate touch with man, not only from without but from within. By becoming Man, Christ wedded humanity. He joined Himself to us in all our human relationships. He claimed every human tie and all departments of human activity for the Divine end. He became one of us so that we are each a very part of Him, members of His family and "partakers of the divine nature." By taking our nature He has made every human personality and every human relationship sacred. Of the effect upon the relation of those who are married, Saint Paul concludes :¹ "For this cause," i.e., because we are members of Christ's Body—"for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church. Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife, even as himself; and let the wife see that she reverence her husband."

Such is the Christian conception of Holy Marriage because it is the expression of the idea of life, which the Incarnation has unfolded. We are not just members of the human race: we are what Christ has shown us that in our humanity we really are, "sons of God," made in God's likeness, governed by spirit, the values of whose life are measured in terms that are spiritual and not only material

¹ Eph. v, 31.

and physical. Hence the body is the instrument of the spirit's working, and human nature is the sphere for the manifestation of the divine life. "The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. . . . know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ."

Sacred and wonderful as is the relationship of man and woman in marriage by the law of nature, it becomes in a special sense "holy marriage" when it is recognised as the relationship in which Christ Himself is the bond of union. To be united by such a bond is to be made one in an eternal relationship. It cannot be broken. It is indissoluble. "It shall never be lawful to put asunder those whom God hath made one." The Christian conclusion therefore is that marriage is holy, because He in whom the twain are made one is God Himself. Upon this truth Christ set His seal: "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Holy marriage is the expression of that principle of living which governs the relation of God to His children. It is love. Love makes of the twain one flesh. And it is therefore love which is the very condition of all realised happiness in married life. Holy marriage is inconceivable except as the expression of this ruling principle. By love the law of all life is fulfilled: and the divinely appointed sphere for its display is essentially that in which two lives find their expression and completeness.

“ To make out of life together something richer, fuller and different from what could be the sum of the two different lives apart, that is the opportunity of marriage. Whether the opportunity will be used depends, like everything else, upon character, upon vision. . . . “ People cannot realise an ideal that they have never seen.”¹

What that ideal is the Church's Marriage Service makes plain.

The vision of life which it presents is of love applied to daily life. The question addressed to those about to be married unfolds the scope of love's supreme claim. “ Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour and keep her in sickness and in health ; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live ? ”

Here is the picture of life as the expression of living by loving. Love is to be applied to all conditions and under circumstances as varying as life itself. And it is the power which alone is adequate for life's needs. Of the supremacy of the power of love to conquer under all conditions Christ gave triumphant display in our nature ; and it is He who is the Bond of this relationship.

Love in Him proved its invincible power to conquer even when its scope was restricted to the arms of a Cross set upon Calvary ; it triumphed even when it was rejected with the cries and acts of con-

¹ Mrs. Creighton, *Successful and Unsuccessful Marriages*, pp. 3-5.

centrated hate. Love indeed "never faileth." So it be love, it will stand every strain which circumstances or conditions, imposed by human sin and weakness, can exert. No limits can be assigned to that power which has its source in God.

With Christ love shall find its triumphant expressions in sickness as in health, in poverty as in wealth. What is impossible on merely human and worldly grounds is possible where love is the ruling principle.

No cases can be so "hard," as the world counts hardship, but love will conquer and find a way to express its constraining power. *But it must be Love.* The meaning of that much misquoted word is only fully understood as we recognise its expression in God Himself. "Passion," which is fitful, emotional and undisciplined, though it often claims to be love, is not worthy of the name. It may possess something of love's fire, but its fires are consuming and reduce life to cold ashes. More often it is that "lust, which when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin and when it is finished bringeth forth death." "Passion" is but the perversion of love: it is love turned sour in lust.

From such an origin marriage must be a catastrophe, as indeed there are alas! only too abundant proofs. With such frequent pitiable exhibitions of disaster in marriage there comes an ever increasingly urgent plea to facilitate divorce.

And this is not surprising because such people have never known what love is; they have had no other vision of life than as the opportunity to indulge self and to gratify desire.

The amazing thing is that apparently honourable men and women, who would think it a disgrace to break their word to a friend, calmly put the marriage vow upon a totally different level.

The "honour of a gentleman" to stand to his losses, as, for instance, in gambling, seems to have a different meaning when it becomes an obligation to stand by his wife when it is "for worse," "for poorer," or "in sickness." Life on a basis of selfishness is a horror and a scandal in any relationship. In the married state it is hell itself.

In no condition of life is the call so imperative to apply religion to life and to bring the principles of Christ into daily practice. It is essentially the relationship in which love can have its perfect work. Love is ever unselfishness in action, with unbounded scope for considerateness, good comradeship, and the chivalry which delights to claim the bigger part of life's burden. It is the sphere in which two persons will be called upon to practise self discipline and self denial. In its practice they find their joy. "If we have less pleasures, we have more happiness," is the frequent testimony from homes where love's secret is securely held. In marriage the opportunity

is granted to two persons for realising the best that is in them and therefore for rendering the finest service of which they are capable.

“ There is always something you can do for that companion whom, of your own free will, you have taken for life : and in giving what you can in patient care for the best interests of the other, it is possible to gain more than is given, to grow in the capacity of service and to learn perhaps that great lesson that sacrifice alone is fruitful.”¹

The power to achieve the realisation of the Christian ideal is gained only as it is sought from Him who is the Bond in Holy Marriage, from God Himself, who has joined man and woman. It is Christ Himself, by becoming Man, who has made us sharers of His own nature. As it is He who is the Eternal Bond of our union, so in Him is strength found to make it enduring.

Christ in possession of our hearts, Christ filling our minds, Christ supreme Master in our lives will make that and all things possible.

We shall be courting disaster if we attempt to achieve the greatest thing of which life is capable apart from Him who is Life and Love. That conviction will determine those who are married to make religion the decisive factor in their life. They will make their home the special sphere for applied

¹ Mrs. Creighton, *ibid*, p. 24.

religion. And that will mean that they bring Christ into its every relationship. Every day will be the opportunity to bring His Love, not human selfishness ; His reverence for human personality ; His chivalry and courtesy into every look and thought and word and action. As we learn to let the spirit of Christ's unselfish Love rule in our hearts, the energy of our love will find its exercise in doing service and in showing honour to those in whom we expect to behold the outshining of the divine glory. Enthroned at the seat of our being, acknowledged as Master in His own house, Christ Himself will make known to us the mystery of Love's power and will conduct us to the experience of the joy of living by loving.

CHAPTER IX

RELIGION APPLIED TO BUSINESS

IN showing how the principles of the Kingdom of heaven are to apply to life on earth, Jesus taught that the virtues which are required in man are the expression in human personality of the eternal attributes of God.

Of these none is more conspicuous than His faithfulness. It is a dominant note in the Bible. "God is faithful." "Great is His faithfulness." "O Lord, thou art my God. . . . I will praise thy Name, for thou hast done wonderful things in faithfulness and truth." "Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." "I will make known thy faithfulness to all generations."

The manifestation of God's faithfulness is to be in human character, and human life is adapted by the Creator to produce it. So life for man, as Christ taught, is a stewardship, in the discharge of which he is to develop faculties and powers which will be eternally employed.

Man has nothing which he has not received; nothing can be called his own. Whether he have one, two

or five talents the essential thing is that he prove his faithfulness—that he be worthy of trust. The highest reward to which he can aspire is to hear such a word of approval: “Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

That which entitles the servant to increased scope for service is that he has proved his worth by being faithful. Life in a word is the school in which to learn and develop the qualities which have eternal value.

It would be strange indeed if it were to be assumed, (as it so generally is), that Christian principles are unpractical and incapable of application to such a universal department of human employ as business. Yet it is constantly asserted that the Christian teaching is mere Idealism and impossible of realisation in actual life. So it has come about that for the most part “business” is regarded as a distinct compartment of human activity, governed by its own laws and conducted on principles which are essentially of this world and remote from the unseen world of spiritual values. The saying that “business is business” is of course the merest truism; but it is generally used to imply that this vast territory must be securely closed against idealism and religion.

The suggestion at the back of the phrase is that the progress of society in its industrial fabric and

its economic activities is to be judged solely by the economic result. It is the economic factor which is regarded as decisive and important.

The end to be achieved is "economic efficiency" by the means which are most effective, without reference to what are called sentimental or religious considerations. To those who repeat the shibboleth "Business is business!" business has nothing to do with religion because its principles depend upon the action of material causes and economic laws.

Against such a contention we must assert at the outset that Jesus Christ meant His principles to apply to every department of human life; and we therefore claim that "the Church's function is not to show society how to be rich, but to show it how to be Christian. We believe that the Christian is not less efficient but more efficient in the affairs of practical life because of his faith, and that mankind will find that if men seek first the Kingdom of God, all other things will be added unto them."¹

In illustration of our Lord's teaching take the group of His parables which include the story of the two sons, the unfaithful steward and Dives and Lazarus. They all deal with the use or misuse which men make of the material goods of which they have the handling. In the first is the story of the wasting of his father's substance by a

¹ Cf. Archbishop's Committee Report, Christianity and Industry, p. 17.

son in riotous living ; in the second, the wasting of his master's goods by a dishonest servant ; and in the last a rich man's waste of life's opportunity by " living in mirth and splendour " while his poorer brother lay sick and starving at his gate. In all of these life is regarded as the opportunity for making a right use of the means of living, and for proving a trustworthiness of character which will survive eternally.

Look at the story of the dishonest steward.¹ After a career of unfaithfulness, at last he does the right thing. He calls his master's debtors and strikes off the amount which he had meant for himself by exaction. We may take it that of the hundred measures of oil, fifty which he struck off was what he had meant for himself. Of the hundred measures of wheat the twenty remitted represented the exaction made in his own interest.

At last he has done the straight thing ; and in so doing he made friends who would stand by him later. The master whom he had cheated could not withhold some sort of admiration for the " wisdom " which he had showed in foregoing an immediate gain for a future advantage.

The children of this world show their wisdom by an alertness to seize present opportunities to secure permanent gains. Almost everyone is wise enough

¹ St. Luke xvi, 1-13.

to see what is for his best interest. Such is the framework of the story.

Then comes our Lord's teaching. "I say unto you, make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles."

The sense has been obscured by the change of "when it shall fail" to "when ye fail" in the Authorized Version. It is the mammon, worldly wealth and position, which will fail in the long run, however it be used. It is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. You may make a wise use of the means or you may waste the opportunity by grasping at them as though they were the end itself.

So our Lord enforces His great lesson. The only principles upon which life can be lived are those which are true to the eternal Kingdom of His Father.

"He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much. . . . If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"

All life in fact depends on this faithfulness, credit, trust. Once shake that foundation and your house is likely to go to ruin. So soon as unfaithfulness gets a footing either on a little or a big scale, it is only a question of time how soon the crash will come.

Trustworthiness is as essential in the errand boy

as in the junior clerk, in a Prime Minister as in a managing director of the biggest concern. The boy who takes a shilling from the till, intending to repay it, is as guilty as the trustee of millions who uses other people's money for his own purposes, intending no doubt to make it good. All human relationships depend upon the foundation of faith in our fellow men. In a remarkable way the nations of the world have been finding fresh proof of this elementary truth. Deadlock is invariably produced by the unwillingness or inability of nations to trust one another. However else an international "stabilization of values" may be effected, it is certain that there will be no security in business between nations until "credit" is restored. And what is "credit" but faith, trust, belief in your neighbour? The stabilizing factor throughout is that confidence which springs from the belief in another's trustworthiness, whether that other be an individual or a nation.

Then is it not absurd to assert, as so many continue to do who scoff at Christ's teaching, that its standard is inapplicable to business? On the contrary Christ would say: "My laws are of universal application. Only in obedience to them can life be enjoyed. In disobedience to them society is ever being brought to a standstill. Practise your religion and you will find how rational it is. By applying its

principles to business or to anything else, you will develop the qualities which are as necessary to-day as they will be found indispensable throughout eternity. All material things, whether in the form of money or position or talents, will only endure for a while. They will fail sooner or later : but if you have used them aright you will have fitted yourself for nobler service. By faithfulness in a very little you fit yourself to be trusted with much. If, on the contrary, you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own ? ”

These are the things which Jesus brings into marked contrast : “ that which is another's ” or “ that which is your own.” “ The unrighteous mammon ” or “ the true riches.”

Everything depends on the point of view ; whether, that is, you regard things as means or ends and upon whether you look upon yourself as an owner or a steward for another. Christ tells us that nothing is our own. We have nothing which we have not received. We are all stewards, who are put in trust with goods which we may either waste or profitably use. The only reason why God trusts us with them is that we may learn faithfulness. Until that lesson be learnt we are not fit to be given that which we have any right to call “ our own.”

“ The true riches ” can only be given to those who

recognise the only real wealth in the life as that which the Father shares with His sons, when He says: "Son, thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine."

Life then is the God-given opportunity to practise that which produces the true and abiding character.

We need no stage more heroic than the one where we are set to play our part in the humblest or the most exalted role.

Business, if you choose to make it so, is a school of honour. There, if you will bring Christ's spirit into it, you shall find the opportunity to learn faithfulness in little things. By the spirit which you can bring to it you may transform competition into a service of friendship, and so find the way to win other men's trust and esteem, instead of provoking their envy and hate. The principles of which our Lord spoke will be found to be capable of universal application. If they be proved true in the humblest sphere, they will serve as a valuable contribution to help the widest circles of men to learn how to make a success of the great business of living together. Nay further, they may be encouraged to try to find in all their commercial and industrial enterprises the joyous experience of prosecuting all business, according to Bacon's formula, "for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate."

Honour in business is, one may reverently say,

a very outshining of the glory of the Kingdom of God upon earth's plane: it is the sacramental sign of that faithfulness which radiates from the eternal Goodness.

Business is meant to be—as thank God in so many cases it is—a very school of honour, in which all its scholars are set to win this as their crowning reward that, “having been found faithful in a very little,” they may have committed to their trust “the true riches.” The Father then can give His children that which they shall count their own for ever.

CHAPTER X

THE POWER TO MAKE PEACE

THE peace of which Christ could speak as His own possession,—“ My peace,”—was a state of mind and a consciousness of union with His Father in heaven which nothing outward could disturb. Life for Him was, as we have seen, the enjoyment of a fellowship with God which lifted Him above all the conditions which strike terror into men’s hearts.

Death and forsakenness had no meaning for one who could say, “ the hour cometh, yea is come, that ye shall leave me alone : and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.”

“ I leave the world : and go unto the Father.”

The powers of evil might do their worst, but they could not touch One who can say, “ the Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me.”

To Christ he was a beaten and an impotent foe. Victory was already in sight, as He cried, “ Be of good cheer : I have overcome the world.”

Though He recognised the pain of parting, it was only the birth-throe of more glorious life. “ Ye now

have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." " These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full."

His peace was in the realised harmony of being where Love reigns, Truth is understood and Life is joy in the possession of all its powers. It was a state of mind and heart and spirit altogether independent of discordant surroundings and of warring elements. It was a manifestation of the principle of the Kingdom of heaven applied to the life on earth. In Christ men beheld " the Peace of God."

And that is Christ's great gift to men : " Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." " That relationship which we have enjoyed is established for ever. Nothing can rob you of it : it is fact not fancy. Take it and make it your own."

" Peace " : How we covet the reality ! How impossible of realisation it seems to-day ! Where is it to be had ? we ask.

Certainly the world cannot give it : man wholly fails to invent any means of securing it. " Not as the world giveth, give I unto you," is Christ's promise of His own sure way of deliverance.

The world's way of making peace is as the culmination of a process of exhaustion in fighting. When the combatants have completely exhausted them-

selves by matching force with force, they make peace of necessity. They end with a great repulsion of feeling against all war because of its ghastly and disastrous effects, but there is no security against its recurrence, because, though for the time the outward conditions make it impossible, the spirit within has not been exorcised; and so long as it persists it is creative. That it is still in possession is evidenced by the prevailing suspicion and fear. The present is only a phase of what may be called "suspended animation." Our pathetic longing is for a "security" which no external rearrangements can guarantee, because security is that state of mind which is *sine curâ*—without anxiety. So we make "Pacts"; we devise "Protocols"; we "explore avenues"; we make "gestures"; we protest our goodwill. But at every fresh turn we see a bogey in the path—the aggressive enemy who is a menace to peace.

The poor world is but attempting to-day the labour of Sisyphus. Its heart and mind are unchanged, and though it protests that it is seeking peace, it still believes with unshaken conviction that its only "security" is in the provision of adequate physical force to meet the enemy who is certain to prove an aggressor. The only "experts" whose judgments it trusts are experts in warfare. It knows no peace-experts, for none have yet entered into the Secret of the "peace of God."

“Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled : neither let it be afraid.” Such is the secret which Christ discloses. It is in the state of heart and mind that the conditions for security and peace are to be found, not in any external readjustments nor in the redistribution of material resources. No physical powers can effect that which only changed minds can produce.

The way to peace is not by any forceful methods. Only too well has experience proved it. The other way, Christ’s way, it has not yet tried since the days of His first disciples. They did enjoy the experience of that peace. Little by little He led them to make ventures in employing the powers of the Kingdom which He unfolded. “Come, and ye shall see” was His invitation and promise to the earliest seekers after the secret of the power to take away the sin of the world. “They came therefore and saw where he abode ; . . . and they abode with him that day !” They gained an experience which enabled them to declare : “We have found the Christ.”

Only slowly did they win advance to base life upon trust in powers that were spiritual ; but Jesus never wearied in encouraging His hesitating scholars, just as He invited Saint Peter to follow Him upon an untried element, the sea. With courageous faith the disciple cried : “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee. And Jesus said Come ! and Peter

walked upon the waters and came to Jesus."

Gradually and with many hesitations, they grew to realise the security which His Presence gave, and though often they were amazed and were afraid as they followed, yet they did follow Him. At last after His Resurrection they did grasp the full meaning of the Peace which he left them.

Again and again His Easter Salutation was, "Peace be unto you!"

When after several appearances their minds were opened so that they gained spiritual understanding of the reality of the unseen Presence of their ever living Lord, they entered into the heritage of the Kingdom which He opened to all believers. Then Christ's power to give peace was seen in the transformation of fearful disciples into bold witnesses. Doubting followers became enthusiastic champions of their unseen Lord, ready and glad to face any dangers or opposition; and the world's notice was arrested by "the boldness of unlearned and ignorant men: and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." No threats could now move them. "They spake the word of God with boldness and with great power gave the Apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." "They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name. And every day in the temple and at home they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus as the Christ."

That peace which they possessed rendered them free from fears and full of joy. It became the characteristic of the men who by the confession of their enemies had turned the world upside down. Their "joy in the Lord" was an experience which the world could not understand, for it came from an inward peace, through sharing the mind of the Prince of peace. Strangely as the exhortation might fall on others' ears, Saint Paul's converts understood his meaning, when he wrote, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." "Rejoice in the Lord alway. The Lord is near. In nothing be anxious. The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus."

If in our own day such a message seems meaningless it is only because the sovereign principle of our religion has not been honestly applied. There never was a moment when its application was more sorely needed.

Consider then what Christ's way will involve. First, for the enjoyment of "the peace of Christ," we must exercise the powers by which we do not let our hearts be troubled nor afraid, and so become masters in the house of our own being. "My peace I give unto you," Christ says: and then adds, "let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

We shall cease to be troubled and anxious only when we abandon the belief that life consists in the abundance of material possessions by discovering that there is no real satisfaction of our being except in God who is its Author. We shall only cease to set an inordinate value upon "things," when we come to know that nothing has any value except as a means to the spiritual end, which is the fulfilment of the purpose of God. When we grasp that principle of our relation to things and persons we are no longer "anxious;" for "anxiety" is the natural state of a mind which is divided, torn in two, distraught. We are freed from such torture when we have made the decision to give a single-minded allegiance to Him "in Whom all things consist: of Whom, by Whom and unto Whom are all things." When we have chosen Him as our Master, we find in His service that perfect freedom, which is attained only by fulfilling His condition: "let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

We need not be the prey of anxious thoughts nor the defenceless victims of fear because we possess the power to direct our thoughts to the One in Whose Mind all things and persons "consist."

The only Unity is in the Mind of God Who is all in all. In His Infinite Mind the Universe of things is held in perfect harmony and is seen in the light

of the Eternal purpose. That is the real world ; and it is an ordered world, not a chaos of conflicting elements. The unreal world, in which those live who take their standard of reality from the ever changing and contradictory reports of physical sense, is just the reflection of the thoughts of the many minds of those who mistake every appearance for reality. The eyes of their mind are out of focus, and it is not surprising that the picture which is drawn presents often such ugly and terrifying shapes.

“ Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid ” is the call of Christ to centre our thoughts in Himself Who is the Truth ; to let the Truth which He manifests govern our mind ; to let His Mind be in us so that our outlook is transformed, and we ourselves are changed into the same image.

“ Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of God and His righteousness ” He gives us as the way to still all mental disquiet ; then “ all these things,” the things which seem to you so essential and for lack of which you are so anxious—“ shall be added unto you.” They will assume their right proportion and you will find that there is no need of your nature which is unsatisfied. “ If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light ” ; that is, a single-minded attention to the Truth as it is in Christ will admit a flood of light upon the whole situation, and you will then see life “ whole,” not in disconnected

kaleidoscopic fragments, because you will be looking at it in focus with the Mind of God.

In the same way, we need not be the victims of fear when we have assured our hearts that love is the only law of our being. If, as Saint John says, "we know and have believed the love which God hath in us," then is "love made perfect with us that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because *as he is, even so are we in this world.*" Then there is complete identity between us and Him; we are of one heart and of one mind; He is in us and we are in Him. Therein true union is effected between the originating Mind of God and His expressed thought in us. In such a condition of heart and mind fear can have no place. "There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear."

Everything then for us depends upon our coming to know God, in such sense that He becomes real to our consciousness. "Acquaint thyself with Him and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee. . . . For then shalt thou have delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God."¹

To contemplate God we let our mind dwell upon the Truth as He has revealed it in Jesus, and let that Truth do its own work. We need to acquaint ourselves with Him: to get to know God as He is. As we let the Holy Spirit lead us into fuller knowledge,

¹ Job xxii, 21, 26.

we may increase our apprehension of God whom none can ever "comprehend." He is measureless, and our apprehension is limited only by our powers of receptiveness and perception. For that reason we have to be on our guard lest we make God in our own image, after our likeness, remembering that His ways are not ours, as His Thoughts are not our thoughts. We can make our ways His ways, and His Thoughts our thoughts only by the process of deliberately directing our thoughts Godward and by contemplating Him as He unfolds to us, in the Jesus whom He sent, the glory of His own Being. In Him, as Saint John writes, "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . And of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace."

In the contemplation of God we come to know Him; and to know Him is to find rest and peace.

It is as heirs to this legacy of His peace that Christians are called to engage in their unique work. They are to be Peacemakers. Indeed if Christ's peace is ruling in their hearts they must of necessity help to transform the society of which they are a part. The state of mind enjoyed by those who have the peace of God in their hearts is infectious. It creates the atmosphere of peace, for "the wisdom which is from above is pure, peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and

good fruits. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by them that make peace."

We cannot evade the call : our commission is to be Peacemakers. Christ's legacy and gift is to those who represent Him in every age and generation. This is truly " an endowed charity " ! Love endows His own with the Power to carry on His divine mission. Christ in a word does not leave us a hopeless enterprise. He has given us His own Spirit. In coming to share His mind and to think His thoughts there are no limits to the transformation which can be effected. Those who have Christ's Mind confront the lying contradictions which emanate from minds full of fears and suspicions with a spiritual force which is irresistible. One with His Mind we look out on the world in its disorder, and upon men and women who are caught in its bewildering turmoil, with the eyes of His Pity. In the light of His Presence we know that the perverted shapes and distorted appearances, which seem so frightful to the senses, are but the workings of minds which do but weave the fantastic patterns of their evil imaginings. That world in disorder is the ugly product of deluded minds and has no place in God's Mind. The delusion can be corrected and utterly effaced whenever the piercing light of Eternal Truth is focused upon it, just as certainly as light dispels darkness.

The instrument fashioned by God to effect that

transformation is the mind of man reflecting the Truth which Christ's Mind ever declares.

Just let Him use your mind for that end, and through you Christ's Peace will be given to the world, which can no where find it. It will create a new mind in men. To that activity of Peace-making all Christians are called. Not by threats of force, nor by arguments and clever speeches, nor by tempting offers of prospective gain will peace be made either between the classes or nations, which confront one another to-day with fear, suspicion and ill-will. We have already proved that it is impossible. "Not by might, nor by power: but by My Spirit saith the Lord."

Then let the Spirit of the Risen Lord in you have free play to do His enlightening, healing, peace-making work in the world. If you will, you can become a focusing lens of that radiant Light of Life which can dispel the darkness which now holds the world captive to fear. You can, (if you will), just let Christ Himself use your hearts and minds.

Think honestly: is not this possible?

Cease to let your mind work on the old lines laid down by ill-will, envy and suspicion. Rather let your mind reflect only Christ's thoughts about your fellow men, whoever they may be. Let His Love be the ruling principle and you will find

your outlook on life and on people transformed.

It has been well said : " You will have no more enemies when you have got rid of your enmities ! " The only enemy with whom any of us have to reckon is the self within, which persists in thinking wrong thoughts and which habitually nourishes suspicions. Deny that self utterly. Say " No " to it decisively. Get rid of it, and let the Mind of Christ govern your thinking instead.

And one thing more. Check in yourself and in others every temper which finds an expression in harsh judgments and unkind criticism. Avoid like the plague repeating whatever voices suspicion and the imputation of bad motives to others. It is worth remembering : " Saying things makes them alive ! " Don't join, then, in any talk which can add to the world's gloom and depression : forbear to repeat all the silly prophecies of coming evil which are current : resist the temptation to make any forecasts of the harm which a suspected enemy is supposed to be plotting in secret. Let your sense of humour save you from taking seriously the absurdities which are suggested by suspicion, fear and prejudice, and which are so solemnly repeated in many conversations. Shun these things as you would disgrace.

It is a golden rule : " *If you can't say anything good about a person, SAY NOTHING !* " Rather make silence the pretext for letting the Love of Christ take

hold of your neighbours through means of your prayer. Let the peace of Christ have such a chance to enfold them.

If we would honestly set ourselves to make Christ's great gift of Peace available for our own and others' use, we might indeed engage in a truly constructive work. We should certainly help to make the world we are living in a happier and a better place. This end we can all help to achieve.

By sustained right thinking we can all make our minds bright reflectors of the Light which alone can guide men's feet into the way of peace. By inhibiting persistently the thoughts which spring from ill-will and fear we can reduce their destructive force to impotence. By concentrating thought habitually upon the Truth which Christ's mind declares we can put forth that power of creative life, whose secret the Lord of all Life has disclosed. Then we shall prove the power of religion by applying it in Christ's own way.

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